

CORNELIUS, BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND FAVOR OF THE
APOSTOLIC SEE, ARCHBISHOP OF HALIFAX :

*To the Clergy and Laity of the Diocese of Halifax, health and
benediction in the Lord :*

DEARLY BELOVED :

Holy Church, ever solicitous for the sanctification and salvation of souls, has spoken through the voice of her Supreme Pastor on earth, and has sought to bring back States and peoples to an observance of those Christian principles, by which alone national greatness, civil freedom and human happiness can be secured. No new theories were propounded in the Encyclical of his Holiness regarding the Constitution of Christian States, published a few months ago. The teaching that the Church is a Supreme and independent Society in all that pertains to the service of God, and the spiritual good of man, is as old as the time of our Divine Saviour. The distinction between the things of God and the things of Cæsar was clearly laid down by him ; and his Apostles fearlessly acted on the injunction to obey God rather than man. No civil power, although civil power is from God, has the right of making laws hostile to Christianity ; and no Christian should obey such laws when made. Man is a reasonable being, created for God, not a machine made for the benefit of scheming politicians, unjust taskmasters, or royal tyrants. He came from God ; he should work for God ; he should aspire to rest in the bosom of his God after the weary pilgrimage of this life. In fulfilling his duties as a citizen he should have the laws of God before his eyes. He should respect the rights of others ; and he should have manliness enough to insist that others respect his.

All this has ever been the teaching of our Church, but it was opportune to proclaim it again from the Chair of Peter. For many false principles were covertly insinuated, or openly defended. The world advocated a reckless license of manners, hurtful alike to man's temporal and eternal good, and sought to defend it by giving it the sacred name of Liberty. The unwary were caught, and even the easy-going good, of whom there are many, from daily intercourse with the world, lost their horror for the corruption around them. If they did not actually participate in it, they raised no voice against it ; they did not shun its promoters : mistaking weakness for charity they gave

it the approval of their silence, and the encouragement, perhaps, of a smiling reproof. Self-indulgence is the god of modern society, but as every violation of the dictates of reason brings sooner or later its punishment, we find people old in their youth, and disgusted with life ere they have well begun to live. Reading everything except what is useful and instructive—dabbling in Sciences, whose first principles they have not mastered, under teachers who do not understand what they profess to expound, the youth of to-day take their place in the world with hearts untrained regarding the duties and responsibilities of life, and with minds too shallow to be impressed even by the grandeur of nature or to rise from its contemplation to the Eternal Creator. Some think that those who profess to be bored by everything, who say they are disappointed in the grandest scenes of nature—who only see failure and wearisomeness where generations saw sublimity and pleasure, are pretending a disappointment they do not feel. But it is not pretence; they are bored, disgusted, weary. But why? Simply because they are too shallow to be capable of receiving ennobling emotions, because self-indulgence has dried up the fount of pure affections; because, whilst having read much, they have studied none. Hence, too, the senseless prattle in which they indulge regarding the end and aim of life, the teachings of Religion, and the action of God, the Creator, in relation to His creatures.

What is the remedy for those manifold evils which afflict society, and which are, in many places, fast tending to bring back the dreary state of the world when men were “without hope!” The same as that which Christ and His Apostles applied when men were living “without God in the world.” Penance and prayer. Penance by which alone sins can be expiated, self-indulgence uprooted, and reason not passion, made the guide of our actions. “Unless you do penance you shall all perish,” are words as true to-day as eighteen hundred years ago. Man’s ingenuity in mechanical appliances may be greater to-day than formerly, but his power of resistance to his corrupt passions is, in itself considered, no greater. Sin has not ceased to be an outrage to God, because fools say in their heart “there is no God”; penance has not ceased to be necessary because the effeminate and self-indulgent find it difficult, or because the corrupt laugh at it, as they do at all restraint of their passions. If any one would go to Christ we are told what he must do—“let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.” Self denial is the first requisite.

The necessity and obligation of prayer are everywhere taught in Holy Scripture. Prayer is at once the spiritual

arms by which we can overcome the enemies of our souls, and the means by which light for the mind, strength for the will, and tenderness of heart can be obtained. The prayer of the Christian is a profession of Faith in God, an act of submission and a mark of confidence in the love of our Creator. Hence it is most pleasing to the Almighty, and most powerful in moving Him to pity and to spare us. The proud of heart, and those who do not understand, whilst, perhaps, pretending to teach Christianity, may laugh at the power of prayer; but God's word endures: "Ask and you shall receive; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you."

In order to promote in the faithful the spirit of Penance and prayer, the only remedy for the ills of the soul, and the only cure for the corruption of society, the Holy Father has not only raised his voice in warning and exhortation, but he has also added the inducement of the graces and privileges of a Jubilee which may be gained during the present year, under the following conditions:

1. That within the course of the present year one shall visit six times the church or churches designated, and there pray for some time according to the intentions expressed by the Pope in granting the Jubilee.

2. That they shall fast and abstain on two days on which they are not already bound to fast and abstain.

3. That they shall truly and sincerely confess their sins, and receive Holy Communion.

4. That each one shall give according to one's means, and after consultation with one's Confessor, an alms for some pious work destined to promote and increase the Catholic Faith. Each one is left free to choose between the various pious works of this nature; still the Holy Father mentions two special ones for which alms would be well bestowed—private schools for children, and seminaries. We, too, knowing the needs of our Diocese would recommend, whilst, of course, leaving each one free, the fund for the support of Ecclesiastical Students.

The Indulgence to be thus gained may be applied by way of suffrage to the souls in Purgatory.

The conditions for gaining this great spiritual favour are not difficult; but if faithfully performed will be something in the way of nourishing a spirit of self-denial and prayer. The churches to be visited for the purpose of gaining the jubilee are:

In the city of Halifax two visits each to St. Mary's, St. Patrick's, and St. Joseph's. Outside of Halifax six visits to the

church or chapel of the Mission in which one is residing at the time. Those prevented by sickness, old age, or any legitimate cause, from fulfilling any, or all, of the foregoing good works can, by disposition of the Pope, have them commuted by their confessor into other works of piety; and children who have not yet made their first communion can be dispensed from the obligation of communicating. Confessors have the same Faculties granted to them by the Holy Father as were granted in Feb., 1879, and with the same exceptions.

Acting on the declaration of the Sacred Penitentiary, issued Jan'y. 15th, 1886, by command of His Holiness, we permit, owing to the difficulty of procuring suitable food, that eggs and white meats may be used on the two days of Fast, the faithful being careful, however, not to exceed in quantity that which constitutes the Ecclesiastical fast.

One Confession and Communion will not suffice to gain the jubilee and satisfy the Easter precept.

The Plenary Indulgence of the jubilee may be gained twice, or oftener, by fulfilling twice or oftener the prescribed works; but only the first time can the privilege of commutation, or dispensation of vows, and the absolution from censures and reserved cases be acquired.

The visits may all be made on the one day, or on different days.

Part of the conditions may be fulfilled in one Diocese, and part in another, provided the dispositions of the various Ordinaries be observed.

Confessors cannot exercise the extraordinary Faculties granted by the Pope, except in the case of those who intend to fulfill the works, and gain the Jubilee.

On your pastoral zeal, dearly beloved brethren of the clergy, we rely to stir up by word and example the faithful to repentance and to a love of prayer, especially the beautiful one of the Rosary. With you, dear children of the Laity, though absent in body, we are present in spirit, and we beseech you to give heed to the voice of God, speaking through our Pontiff, and calling you to glorify him by the practise of Christian virtues.

† C. O'BRIEN,

Archbishop of Halifax.

OUT THE PORTA PIA, }
Feb. 21st, 1886. }

By order of His Grace the Archbishop,

E. F. MURPHY, *Sec'y.*

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